

# WORKERS WORLD

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50¢



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Palestinians cry out their anguish. New York, Jan. 11.

## Gazans resist despite U.S.-Israeli war crimes

By LeiLani Dowell

Jan. 13—Eighteen days into the massive Israeli assault on the Gaza Strip, the death toll of Palestinians living in the densely populated area is nearing 1,000. In the same period, 13 Israelis have died—only three of them civilians. Despite such terrible odds, the will to resist of the Palestinian people continues, supported by growing demonstrations throughout the world.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health reported on Jan. 12 that 910 Palestinians had been killed, including 292 children and 75 women. In addition, 4,250 had been wounded. While U.S.-provided bombs and bullets rain down on the people, many are also dying of cold and hunger. The border crossing with Egypt, where aid convoys have attempted to cross into Gaza and where Palestinians have attempted to flee, remains closed.

The U.S. abstained from a mildly worded U.N. Security Council resolution on Jan. 8 that called for a ceasefire. While the legally binding resolution passed with 14 votes and the one abstention, it has had no effect on Israel's offensive.

U.S. General Assembly President Miguel d'Escoto of Nicaragua today called the Israeli offensive against the Palestinians "genocide," reflecting a growing sentiment around the world.

The Mubarak regime in Egypt, which itself is propped up by U.S. aid, is supposedly trying to broker a cessation of fighting while keeping its border with Gaza

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**LET GAZA LIVE!**  
Protests throughout U.S. 8

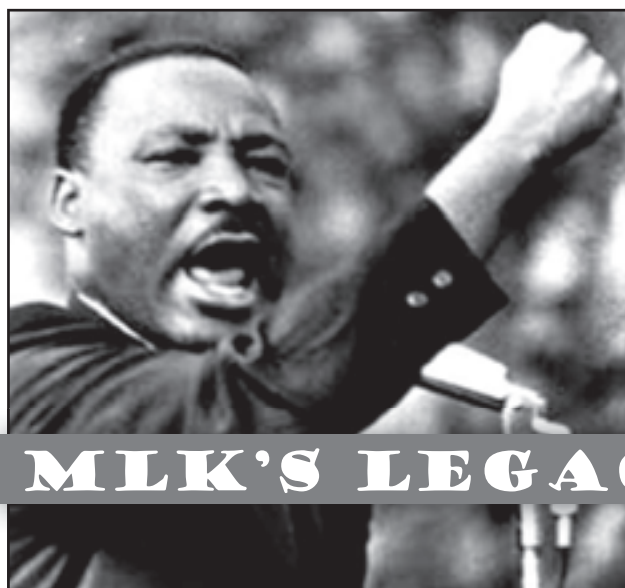
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PHOTO: PVN/JOE YUSKAITIS

Anti-Zionist rabbis shred Israeli flag during New York rally.



## MLK'S LEGACY TODAY

Lessons from the past 6

## Amid capitalist crisis

# What can win JOBS?

By Fred Goldstein

The intensifying capitalist crisis, which is bringing greater and greater suffering daily, is leaving the workers and the oppressed with no alternative but to organize a fightback. The deadly waves of unemployment, foreclosures, homelessness, hunger and repression are spreading while the ruling-class politicians and experts debate over the terms of the so-called "stimulus package."

With 533,000 jobs lost in December, official unemployment went up to a 16-year high of 7.2 percent. The annual job loss for 2008 was over 2.59 million, the highest since World War II. The rapid rate of layoffs has brought the official number of unemployed to 11.1 million workers.

Unemployment of Black men over the age of 20, which was already officially double-digit, jumped from 12.1 percent to 13.4 percent in December. For African-American youth from 16 to 19, the figures

were a staggering 32.2 percent rising to 33.7 percent in the same month. White youth unemployment also rose to 18.7 percent.

The rarely published figure of "total unemployment" grew from 12.6 percent to 13.5 percent. Total unemployment includes those workers forced to take part-time work who need full-time jobs as well as workers who are known to have become so discouraged that they have stopped looking for work.

The average number of hours worked was down to 33.3 in December, the lowest since these records were first kept in 1964.

The most important aspect of the December figures is that December is usually a month of increased hiring, even during slow times, as retailers gear up for holiday sales, manufacturers put on additional workers to fill rush orders for inventory, and the restaurant and enter-

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Oscar Grant and family

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Baltimore, Dec. 30

WW PHOTO: STEVEN CECI

**SAVE PEOPLE'S HOMES**

Michigan, Baltimore campaigns 4-5

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# Sanctuary movement supports surge in GI resistance

By Dee Knight

The current surge in GI resistance, as reported in earlier articles in *Workers World*, has begun to stimulate calls for a sanctuary movement. In such a movement, people massively communicate unconditional support for GIs who refuse to fight in unjust wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. Sanctuary cities have been established in Ithaca, N.Y., and Berkeley, Calif.

Such a movement has also been underway in Israel. Dozens of young Israelis have refused to be part of the Israeli occupation force on the West Bank or in Gaza, scene of the latest slaughter of civilians.

Workers World spoke with John Lewis, a national field organizer of the American Servicemen’s Union (ASU) in August 1969, when an earlier sanctuary struggle took place in Honolulu in protest of the war against Vietnam.

The struggle started when Louis “Buffy” Perry entered the Crossroads Church there amid a flurry of publicity on Aug. 6. “I’ve chosen to begin a lifestyle of noncooperation, on any level, with the military establishment,” Perry told reporters. “I urge all my brothers and sisters to do the same.”

### Began with a mass protest

The local anti-war movement, known as the Hawai’i Resistance, held an anti-war march and rally of 350 people on Aug. 10 to commemorate Nagasaki Day. GI participants and their civilian supporters demanded “a bill of rights” for military personnel. By the end of that day, six GIs went AWOL and sought sanctuary inside the Church of the Crossroads, joining Perry.

During the next week, Black Marines rebelled at the nearby Kaneohe Marine Corps Air Station and a delegation from the sanctuary church demonstrated support for them. Marines and soldiers from other bases and from the tens of thousands visiting Hawaii on rest and recreation break from Vietnam began to join those in the sanctuary. Some who didn’t join the sanctuary brought food and other material aid.

The Hawaii People’s Coalition for Peace and Justice quickly formed to support the soldiers. Two “sanctuaries” for AWOL soldiers were established: the Church of the Crossroads and the First Unitarian Church of Honolulu. During the next four weeks, Honolulu became a hotbed of GI resistance, with over 100,000 military personnel on the island of Oahu at Pearl Harbor, Wickham Air Force Base, Scofield Barracks and Kaneohe Marine Corps Air Station, plus GIs on leave from Vietnam. According to legal records from a case brought three years later, at least 24 soldiers refused to cooperate in a war they didn’t agree with and took refuge in the churches.

“You have to picture the grounds of the Crossroads teeming with people,” said Cindy Lance, who stayed at Crossroads Church during the sanctuary struggle. “In the evening there would be maybe a couple hundred support people bringing food and other supplies or just coming to stay for the evening, singing and talking with the GIs.”

About dawn on Friday, Sept. 12, military police stormed the two churches and seized some 12 AWOL GIs. Others escaped. The Unitarian Church caretaker remembered waking up with an MP’s gun to his head. The raids occurred simultaneously and were over quickly. The soldiers would face court-martial.

“It was a dramatic end to a dramatic demonstration,” Unitarian pastor Gene Bridges said of the raid. He

explained that the sanctuary idea derives from medieval Christian practice, when a person fleeing authorities could find safe haven inside a church.

### Liberated Barracks

Cindy Lance continued to work with Liberated Barracks, an organization spawned by the sanctuary movement that continued to reach out to GIs after the sanctuary raids. “I think the military simply wanted the sanctuary movement to die,” Lance said. “They probably thought we would be demoralized after the bust and just fade away. On the contrary, we continued to visit the guys in the brigs and attend their trials.”

Many GIs defied the MPs’ efforts to arrest them. The cops only caught John Lewis after a dramatic chase across Honolulu by a convoy of vehicles—documented by a BBC-TV news team in Honolulu to cover the sanctuary movement. Lewis ended up in the Fort Dix stockade in New Jersey.

Other GIs who had participated in the sanctuary decided to leave the country and go to Canada. The life-and-death gravity of the situation changed not only the lives of the GIs, but also the thinking of some anti-war activists. Community members began secretly housing AWOL GIs in their homes.

An earlier sanctuary movement was integral to the anti-slavery abolitionist struggle of the 19th century, known as “the Underground Railroad.” Thousands of runaway slaves found freedom and a new life through the heroic support provided to them by churches and individuals who sheltered and guided them, often at extremely high risk to themselves. This legacy is important to the current struggle. Then, as now, those who provided sanctuary were consciously doing everything they could to win immediate freedom for the victims of a criminal government and its institutions arrayed against them.

Today, it is unknown how many GIs are living a semi-underground AWOL existence, although thousands are AWOL. During the Vietnam War, hundreds of thousands were AWOL, and non-white GIs especially were sheltered by their families and other community members.

Today, to the extent it exists, this embryonic form of sanctuary has been largely clandestine. It may be possible to make it public if it can be made clear to those who remain in hiding that there is widespread public support for them in their communities and in society at large.

Some worry about the difficulty of providing sanctuary. In a 2003 article, Cindy Lance commented: “Wasn’t it difficult for Germans to help Jews escape, or for whites to smuggle slaves to freedom? It’s not a question of degree of difficulty, it’s a question of doing what’s right.” □

## MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

The following sections of the book are an outline of its contents: • Black liberation & the working-class struggle • The material basis for reparations in the U.S. • Brief overview of racist oppression & heroic resistance • What Hurricane Katrina exposed to the world • Africa: A battleground against colonialism and for sovereignty • Justice for the Caribbean • A salute to women revolutionaries • Why fight-back is inevitable • Black labor and class solidarity

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# When will change come?

# Cops in three cities gun down Black men

By Larry Hales

In the early morning of the first day of the new year, as celebrations around the country were waning and millions were clinging to a hope of change coming soon with the first African-American president, the police of Bay Area Rapid Transit demonstrated the brutality of the capitalist state in Oakland, Calif.

In fact, within a 24-hour period, from New Year’s Eve into New Year’s Day, three Black men in three different cities were shot by cops. Two were killed. Although some things on the surface may change, the racist nature of the bourgeois state—the apparatus that protects the capitalist system—remains the same.

**New Orleans cops kill young father**

In New Orleans at around midnight, as a fireworks display illuminated the sky, Adolph Grimes, who had evacuated during Hurricane Katrina and settled in Houston, arrived back in his home town to visit his family.

According to his father, Adolph Grimes Jr., “He made it at 12 o’clock exact, with a second to spare.” (nola.com, Jan. 3)

The time the family would get to spend with Adolph Grimes III would be short. Three hours later he was brutally gunned down by nine plainclothes cops, supposedly part of a drug task force.

Grimes was in his car waiting for a cousin when he was surrounded by cops. The end result was that Grimes, 22, married and the father of a 17-month-old son, was gunned down in a hail of 48 bullets. He was shot 14 times, 12 times in the back.

Police allege that Grimes shot first, but even cop superintendent Warren Riley admits that Grimes probably did not know the men in plainclothes were cops.

Grimes had a license to carry a hand-

gun. Whether he had one or not, however, he had the right to defend himself from a perceived robbery or worse.

The onus falls on the police who provocatively approached the vehicle, most likely because a young Black man was in it.

**Texas cops shoot ball player**

On the same night, in the city of Bellaire outside Houston, which is at least 95 percent white, white cop Jeff Cotto shot Robbie Tolan, son of Bobby Tolan, who played professional baseball for 15 years with the St. Louis Cardinals.

The young Tolan, who played baseball for the minor league Washington Nationals, and his cousin Anthony Cooper were followed by a police car on their way home from a fast food restaurant around 2 a.m.

Tolan and Cooper had exited Tolan’s SUV and were walking toward the house when they were told to get on the ground. According to Cooper, “He was saying ‘Stop! Stop! Stop!’ We were saying ‘Why? Why?’ We didn’t know he was a police officer.” (cbs11tv.com, Jan. 7)

Tolan’s parents came outside, and his mother was pushed against a wall, which reportedly elicited a response from Tolan. He was then shot, and still has a bullet lodged in his liver.

The cops said there were reports that vehicles were stolen in the area. Mike Morris, an uncle, said, “This is a classic case of racial profiling, I think.”

Family attorney Geoffrey Berg said of the city’s response, “I think the city would have done well had it said it was sorry that it happened—if the city had expressed some regret that a member of its police force shot a member of a family—the only African-American family on the block.”

**Killing in Oakland caught on video**

Anger in response to the fatal shooting of Oscar Grant on the platform of a

train station in Oakland has reverberated across the country. The brutal tragedy was captured on a cell-phone camera by a passenger inside a waiting BART train. The video was aired on KTVU on Jan. 6.

The person with the camera can be heard in the background saying, “Baby, I’m fine, I’m just recording.” Someone responds, “You gotta take pictures of this shit.”

In the video several men are seen sitting against a wall and one is on the floor in handcuffs. Three cops are standing. The passengers on the train are very vocal in response to the over-aggressive attitude of the cops.

A person later identified as Oscar Grant, who is handcuffed and on his knees, moves and is pushed down onto his stomach. One cop has a knee in his back, another a knee on his neck.

The cop kneeling on Grant’s back stands up, pulls his gun from its holster and fires one shot into Grant’s back. Reportedly, the bullet entered Grant’s body twice, ricocheting off the floor after passing through him and entering him again. Grant died later in the hospital.

The shooting of Grant prompted an immediate vocal response at the station. People are heard banging on the train doors as they close.

After the cell-phone coverage was aired on Jan. 6, the community responded with rallies and a rebellion. When cops in riot gear approached a rally on Jan. 7, the day of Grant’s funeral, it turned into a full-fledged rebellion. That same day BART police officer Johannes Mehserle, who shot Grant, resigned.

BART officials had refused to release the cop’s name, saying they had yet to interview Mehserle, whose state-appointed attorney had not gotten the cop to sit down for an interview.

While BART stalled, the people

responded.

The shooting is so obviously a case of brutality and deserves the cop’s arrest on charges of murdering Grant that even Oakland Mayor Ron Dellums asked for an investigation, like that of any other homicide, and appeared at the rally.

The youth of Oakland, especially youth of color, have had enough. In videos of the rally, the young people grow increasingly agitated at the cop presence and attack a police car, ramming it with a dumpster. (cbs2.com, Jan. 7)

More than 100 people were arrested at the protest. It has to be demanded that they be given full amnesty. The people have a right to their indignation.

The righteous anger persists, as it should. On the same day as the rebellion, the public responded angrily at a BART public hearing. Another protest followed the next day and one is planned for Jan. 12.

A protester in the crowd on Jan. 7 held a sign referring to the situation in Gaza. Though the violence propagated here against communities of color on a daily basis by the police may not be as intense as the massacres and atrocities happening in Gaza, its aim and wellspring are the same.

The violence emanates from a perspective of those in control—to protect the status quo and to beat the oppressed and exploited into submission with violence.

The oppressed have a right to respond however they see fit. That response will grow more vociferous as the world, especially the imperialist nations, plunge deeper into economic crisis, and this crisis produces more crises and calamities natural to a system based on exploitation.

The oppressed and workers will advance politically. The demand for justice will ring in unison from Oakland to New Orleans to the Gaza Strip to Iraq to Greece: Stop state terror! Down with imperialist war! □

## On 36th anniversary of Roe v. Wade

# Fight continues for reproductive justice

By Kris Hamel

Roe v. Wade, the U.S. Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion as a woman’s right, will be 36 years old on Jan. 22. The 1973 ruling was wrested from a reactionary bench after years of struggle by women and their male supporters, as well as many legal and medical groups. Ever since, women’s right to reproductive freedom has been under vicious attack by right-wing, racist, anti-woman and anti-choice forces.

In the November 2008 election, voters reaffirmed their support for reproductive rights by defeating anti-choice ballot measures in South Dakota, Colorado and California. Across the U.S. they overwhelmingly chose Barack Obama for president. Obama supports the right to abortion and women’s reproductive health care.

**Roll back Hyde Amendment, other restrictions!**

A letter to Melody Barnes, head of Obama’s Domestic Policy Council, was prepared by the Hyde—30 Years Is Enough! campaign, a project of the National Network of Abortion Funds. Women’s rights and reproductive rights leaders met with Barnes and other members of the Obama transition team in December to begin discussing how to “ensure real reproductive choices for all women.”

The letter states in part: “For more than 30 years, the Hyde Amendment and other funding restrictions have affected the poorest and most vulnerable of low-income Americans, with a disproportionate impact on women of color and immigrant women. The Hyde Amendment denies abortion access to the 7 million women of reproductive age who are currently enrolled in Medicaid. These funding restrictions are the most detrimental of all attacks on safe, legal abortion care, and represent a clear violation of low-income women’s human rights.”

The Barnes letter urges Obama to “strike language in his first budget that blocks women’s access to abortion care, including restrictions on abortion funding for Medicaid-eligible women and Medicare beneficiaries (the Hyde Amendment), federal employees and their dependents (FEHB), residents of the District of Columbia, Peace Corps volunteers, Native American women, and women in federal prisons. Though attached to different funding streams, we consider these restrictions to be a single issue requiring consistent and equal treatment by President Obama.”

The letter to Barnes further states: “By striking funding restrictions, President Obama can place abortion back in the context of health care, thereby setting a new tone and signaling to Congress his commitment to comprehensive women’s health

care. [T]his early commitment will bolster the efforts of our diverse and growing grassroots advocacy campaign as we continue educating the public and Members of Congress about the urgent need for a full repeal of these restrictions.”

Only 43 percent of House members in the new Congress are abortion rights supporters. The U.S. Senate now has 40 members who are committed to reproductive rights. (www.naral.org)

Among the signers of the Barnes/Obama letter are dozens of national organizations such as the Center for Reproductive Rights, Catholics for Choice, the National Organization for Women, Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health, and Black Women for Reproductive Justice. Dozens of local and regional organizations are also signers.

**Bush’s parting blow to women**

On Dec. 18 the Bush administration’s Department of Health and Human Services issued a new regulation affecting 17 million poor women—a disproportionate number of whom are women of color—who are enrolled in public health care programs. The restrictive regulation significantly impairs women’s ability to get such basic reproductive health services as contraception, counseling and information necessary to make decisions about their own health.

A Center for Reproductive Rights press

release stated: “The new regulation allows people only tangentially related to the provision of health care and an increased number of medical institutions to refuse a woman care based on religious and moral beliefs. HSS claims this will further protect health care providers against discrimination; but in reality, it leaves women who rely on public programs unprotected and seriously violates their rights and needs as patients. HSS also purposely leaves the door open for health care providers to justify refusing a woman basic forms of contraception such as birth control pills and IUDs.” (www.reproductiverights.org, Dec. 18)

Advocates for reproductive rights are urging incoming-President Obama to immediately rescind the new HSS regulation. The petition “Urge Obama to Take Action” can be signed at www.naral.org.

Just as it took a mass struggle to win Roe v. Wade 36 years ago, access to full reproductive health care for all women will involve grassroots organizing to build a strong, broad-based coalition for women’s reproductive rights. This struggle will continue on a national and state-by-state basis in order to stop ongoing right-wing, anti-choice initiatives and begin establishing reproductive justice for all women.

*The writer is a co-founder of DANFORR—the Detroit Action Network For Reproductive Rights, one of the signers of the Barnes/Obama letter. Email kris@workers.org.*



# As politicians kneel to banks

## Struggle heats up to stop foreclosures

By Kris Hamel  
Detroit

Activists with the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions are stepping up their struggle for a moratorium on foreclosures, evictions, utility shutoffs and plant closings. At a Jan. 10 coalition meeting, organizers announced plans for a demonstration at the State Capitol in Lansing on Feb. 3 when Gov. Jennifer Granholm delivers her annual State of the State address.

Michigan has been in a state of severe economic depression for the last decade. The state has lost half a million, mostly union, industrial jobs over the last five years. The House Fiscal Agency is forecasting the loss of another 258,000 jobs in the next two years. (Detroit Free Press, Jan. 7)

With the official unemployment rate at 9.6 percent, the highest in the U.S., Michigan residents will face increased foreclosures as more workers lose their incomes and as adjustable rate mortgages reset this year.

In 2006-07 more than 72,000 home-

owners in the metro Detroit area alone went into foreclosure. Many thousands more lost their homes in 2008. Eighteen percent of Detroit's homes are vacant and abandoned, second only to New Orleans. The 36th District Court in Detroit is the busiest eviction court in the country.

Foreclosures are destroying entire communities as vacant and stripped homes depress property values and make Michigan's cities look like they've been hit by a hurricane. The average value of homes sold after foreclosure and eviction is approximately \$5,000. Homeowners have seen the property value of their homes reduced to levels not seen in 30 or 40 years.

### Stop legislative attacks on homeowners!

The Feb. 3 demonstration is especially critical in light of the recent attempt by Granholm and the state legislature to significantly reduce the redemption period for homeowners in foreclosure. A six-month redemption period has been in effect in Michigan since 1965. This is

the time during which homeowners may buy back their homes for the total amount owing on their mortgages before being evicted.

At the urging of the governor, legislators met with the Michigan Poverty Law Center—supposedly an advocacy group for poor people—and the Michigan Bankers Association and came up with legislation that would actually worsen the situation for workers and poor people facing foreclosure by reducing the redemption period by up to three months.

What started out as an attempt to mandate minimal foreclosure notice requirements by lenders to homeowners ended up with concessions to the banks. Senate Bill 1666 placed the burden solely on borrowers to contact a counselor within 21 days to begin loan modification negotiations or else face a much shortened period before being tossed out of their homes by the banks.

In reality it is almost impossible for the average homeowner to successfully communicate and negotiate with her/his mortgage lender. Most banks and lenders,

even when mandated by law to modify loans to help homeowners avoid foreclosure, have laid off workers and reduced personnel so much that often there's no one to even answer the telephones.

There is no effective mechanism in place to help borrowers. Experienced attorneys have had to download federal Securities and Exchange Commission documents in order to obtain phone numbers of banking officials who are in a position to modify loans. The average person doesn't have the resources and technology necessary to hunt down a banker.

Marilyn Mullane, an attorney at Michigan Legal Services which represents people in foreclosure, got wind of the secret bill before it went to a vote in late December and sent thousands of emails to alert community organizers about the outrageous situation unfolding in Lansing.

Emails and phone calls to legislators and the governor's office stopped passage of this anti-homeowner law. But the banks and the politicians in their pockets have vowed to bring back an equally reactionary bill.

*Continued on next page*

## Media day at the auto show

# Autoworkers demand 'No concessions!'

By Martha Grevatt  
Detroit

"This is the show." So brags the Web site of the North American International Auto Show. It's the place to be if you want to be "the first to see the hottest new cars."

Yet on Jan. 11, opening day, the media of the world were focusing on an event outside Detroit's Cobo Center. More than 150 autoworkers held a militant picket line to protest the concessions being demanded from the United Auto Workers as part of a \$17.4 billion government loan to General Motors and Chrysler LLC.

"This whole thing about how we make so much more than foreign competitors is a lie," said Tony Browning, a 34-year Chrysler veteran. "We work damn hard for our money and I don't see a whole lot of people who are going to vote to cut our paychecks in half." (Detroit News, Jan. 11)

Popular chants included "No concessions" and "No jobs, no peace." The demonstration was called by Auto Worker Caravan, which last month took a car caravan to Washington and confronted the anti-union senator from Alabama, Richard Shelby.

Autoworkers have more than enough reasons to be concerned about their economic future. While the UAW rank and file were picketing, they knew their leaders had been meeting to discuss additional concessions.

Fearful of a GM or Chrysler bankruptcy if the companies did not get a federal loan, leaders of UAW locals at GM, Chrysler and Ford agreed last month to suspend the jobs bank. The bank pays workers most of their salary after 48 weeks of layoff. Prior to that the workers collect a combination of state unemployment benefits and Supplemental Unemployment Benefits from a corporate fund.

Abolition of both the jobs bank and SUB is one of the terms of the government loan to the auto companies, without which repayment in full could be demanded by March 31. The agreement signed by GM and the Treasury Department also demands wage and benefit cuts from active workers and halts raises of retiree pensions.

The loan comes due in 2011. Up until

that time, workers at the Detroit Three are prohibited from striking. This, the most outrageous provision of all, was made public only in the past few days. (Associated Press, Jan. 9)

Such intrusive government meddling in the collective bargaining process and denial of the right to strike is a flagrant violation of the 1935 National Labor Relations Act.

Another threat to the UAW is a growing consensus in Washington and Wall Street that Chrysler is history. Himanshu Patel, the public face of JPMorgan Chase, "speculated" that "some sort of orderly down-stepping of Chrysler may be in the works." (Detroit Free Press, Jan. 8) In fact, this Wall Street "auto analyst" has been agitating for a GM-Chrysler merger for months. Not exactly neutral, Patel represents the bank that loaned the New York hedge fund Cerberus the \$6 billion it needed to buy Chrysler in 2007.

The bankers' sentiments were echoed by both Democratic and Republican members of the Senate Banking Committee during the hearings on the auto bailout last year.

A compliant press is creating a case for Chrysler's disintegration, with headlines such as "Life on the Sinking USS Chrysler," which emphasizes that Chrysler sales for 2008 were down 53 percent over the previous year. In fact every auto company in the world had double-digit drops in car sales in 2008. (Detroit Free Press, Jan. 8)

Even with falling sales, Chrysler sold 300,000 more vehicles in 2008 than it did in 1980, and its market share is 11 percent now versus 9.9 percent that year. The company is building cars with at least 33,000 fewer workers than when Cerberus bought Chrysler in August 2007.

Far more compelling than the media's slanted statistics is the impact Chrysler's dismantling would have on the 66,000 remaining workers. The business analysts discussing the future of the U.S. auto industry regard the human cost of restructuring as irrelevant.

The rank-and-file workers, however, who stood out in the cold for hours on a Sunday afternoon, are making their voices heard. □



WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

Autoworkers picket in Detroit. Government 'bailout' plan rips up their union contract.

## Heavy filings for jobless benefits crash system

By Martha Grevatt

In "Talkin' 'Bout a Revolution," Tracy Chapman sang about "wasting time on the unemployment lines."

Twenty years later, high-tech—while a contributing factor to unemployment—has made standing in line a thing of the past. States have cut intake workers and closed neighborhood unemployment offices. Now a newly laid-off worker must call a processing center or file online.

In the first week of January, as the number of workers filing new claims reached a 26-year high and the U.S. unemployment rate climbed to 7.2 percent, the job center computer systems in New York, North Carolina and Ohio crashed.

All 50 states reported being overwhelmed by the volume of calls: 10,000 per hour in New York, 2 million per day

in California, doubling of the number of claims in Kentucky, tripling in North Carolina, and so on. "Be prepared to wait and just hang on. Try not to get frustrated," urged Howard Cosgrove, spokesperson for the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. (Associated Press, Jan. 6)

This reporter, a laid-off Chrysler worker, spent over four hours calling the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, which has absorbed the once-separate Ohio Bureau of Employment Services. Each time, after I listened to a series of recorded messages, a voice told me that I could file online and that "this call will end now."

But when I went online, the Web site was down. Finally a human being explained that the computers were down, and ODJFS

*Continued on next page*



Granolm and the legislature oppose SB 1306, a two-year foreclosure moratorium bill introduced in 2008 by State Sen. Hansen Clarke. The governor has publicly stated her opposition to a two-year moratorium and said that any measures to give relief to the people must also “satisfy” the banks and mortgage lenders.

**Press for moratorium, other demands**

Coalition organizers continue to mobilize statewide to demand Gov. Granholm use her executive authority to declare a state of economic emergency in Michigan and impose a two-year moratorium on all foreclosures and evictions. They continue to demand the legislature pass SB 1306 mandating a two-year moratorium.

The Feb. 3 demonstration will bring together moratorium activists and others who want to protest the ongoing economic attacks on workers and the poor. Coalition literature demands, “Bail out the people!” and asks the pointed question, “Which side are you on?”

Utility shutoffs, budget cuts, school cutbacks and closings, plant closings, layoffs and other issues will be addressed. People with grievances and demands for the governor and state legislature are urged to make their voices heard in Lansing on Feb. 3.

For more information contact the Moratorium NOW! Coalition at 313-887-4344 or visit [www.moratorium-mi.org](http://www.moratorium-mi.org). Donations to help in this work can be sent to the coalition office at 23 E. Adams, 4th Floor, Detroit, MI 48226. □

# Job cuts devastate small towns

**By Joe Johnson**  
**Chippewa Falls, Wis.**

The Chippewa Valley, once called “Wisconsin’s Silicon Valley,” has just been hit by the termination of more than 1,000 factory jobs at SGI, Hutchinson Technology and other computer parts manufacturers. Layoffs have also been announced at Leeson Electric Corp., which makes electric motors.

The damage and pain of this blow have yet to be fully felt by the people here.

This writer, who is convalescing from a life-threatening fall, was visited recently by a friend who brought some holiday food and the news that her job at Hutchinson was gone. She is the only support for her two grade-school-age children and has to

workers were filling out applications by hand. Three days later there was still no computer record of my application.

The state had known for two weeks that the near-shutdown of Chrysler alone would lead to thousands of new claims—including mine—in the first week of the year. Why weren’t enough workers hired to handle the flood of calls? Why weren’t there enough computer technicians to get the system up and running in a timely manner?

The number of unemployed workers is officially 11 million and rising. This is an undercount. How are these workers supposed to find time to look for a job if they’re spending all day trying to file for a measly—in Ohio the maximum is around \$400 a week—unemployment check?

With joblessness on a par with the recession of the early 1980s, it’s a cruel irony of capitalism that even the agencies that service the unemployed are understaffed.

Maybe it’s not such a bad idea to be “talkin’ ’bout a revolution.” □

# ‘Stop foreclosures & evictions!’

**By Steven Ceci**  
**Baltimore**

The Network to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions rallied outside City Hall here on Jan. 12 to call on Mayor Sheila Dixon and the City Council to make Baltimore a “foreclosure-and-eviction-free zone.”

The group is calling on the city government to call a moratorium on foreclosures; to support an effort to have the sheriff’s office extend its holiday moratorium on foreclosures and evictions for the winter months; to call on banks directly to halt foreclosure proceedings; and to demand the Public Service Commission and Baltimore Gas & Electric Co. halt utility shutoffs during the winter months.

Sharon Black, co-coordinator for the network, told the rally, “The recent announcements that unemployment is now at 7.2 percent, which is far too conservative a figure, along with the fact that even more significant job losses will take place in the next few months, make our campaign urgent.

“The economic downturn, which many are now referring to as a depression, calls for innovative solutions that address the problems of foreclosures, evictions, utility shutoffs, joblessness and hunger.”

Andre Powell, an AFSCME delegate to the Baltimore Metropolitan Central Labor



WW PHOTO: STEVEN CECI

Council, said, “We must revive Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s movement for Jobs or Income Now. As a union representative, I would like to express my solidarity with the community and lend our voice to demand a moratorium on foreclosures, evictions, layoffs and budget cuts.”

Other speakers represented Pledge of Resistance and the Center for Non-

Violence; the All Peoples Congress; ACORN; the Maryland Coalition to Stop BGE Rate Hike; the Campaign for Fresh Air and Clean Politics; and the Baltimore Economic Crisis Response Network.

The network will be leading a contingent called “Stop Foreclosures and Evictions—Jobs or Income Now” in the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. annual parade. □

# What workers need to know about Detroit’s budget crisis

**By Cheryl LaBash**  
**Detroit**

On Jan. 6 Standard and Poor’s triggered a financial emergency in Detroit by lowering the city’s rating to “junk bond” status.

The Detroit City Charter mandates that the city government must protect the needs of the residents, but interim Mayor Ken Cockrel Jr. is concocting a deficit reduction plan based on massive layoffs of city workers and the sale or lease of city infrastructure assets to profit financial institutions.

Cockrel continues to ignore the demand for a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions—a measure that costs the city nothing but can provide an important step toward economic recovery by stabilizing population and keeping homes on the city tax rolls.

A city where more than 85 percent of the residents are African Americans, Detroit is already struggling to overcome unemployment and poverty—the result of decades of racist disinvestment and auto industry “restructuring” job losses that hit Black workers hardest. It is this corporate disinvestment that is at the root of the city’s annual structural budget shortfalls.

The current global capitalist collapse has brought Detroit an epidemic of layoffs and home foreclosures. They have been intensified by racist subprime and deceptive lending practices that targeted Black communities and single women homebuyers.

The city workforce is so depleted by layoffs that there aren’t enough accountants to file financial reports. Yet the mayor has mandated a 10 percent cut in each department—on top of recurring cuts many times over the past eight years.

To date, three financial institutions have been implicated in the new strong-arming of Detroit’s finances. They include Merrill Lynch, now owned by Bank of America, UBS and AIG. (Detroit News, Jan. 7 and 8)

BOA and AIG received \$110 billion in taxpayers’ money in the federal bank bailout.

UBS sells hedge funds, often a way of betting against the success of an investment, and credit default swaps—a form of insurance that promises payment to investors in mortgage securities and other bonds if the borrower defaults.

Even before Standard and Poor’s lowered the bond rating, Detroit officials had announced that the city owed \$300

million more than its income. The rating change not only increased the interest rate for future borrowing—meaning less funds available for city services—but also triggered a retroactive jump in bond interest from \$90 million to \$400 million.

How did this happen?

In 2005 the city formed a nonprofit corporation called the Detroit Retirement Funding Trust to sell approximately \$1.2 billion in taxable pension obligation certificates. The proceeds from this sale made up a projected shortfall in the defined-benefit pension funds for Detroit workers and Detroit police and fire employees.

This plan was viewed as a plus because the debt did not show on Detroit’s books and the excess income of \$80 million offset part of the annual budget deficit. (America’s Intelligence Wire, Feb. 8, 2005)

But it all fell apart. “Because of the financial meltdown crippling the economy, interest rates fell and the amount the city would owe investors in the case of a rating downgrade went from \$90 million to more than \$400 million. Financial firm AIG lost its ability to insure Detroit’s payment to creditors because of its bankruptcy and bailout by the federal government.” (Detroit News, Jan. 7)

In December, New York transit riders had protested a similar problem. The city threatened fare increases after AIG, which had guaranteed the city’s financial transactions, failed and was bailed out but lost its credit rating.

In Detroit, Mayor Cockrel and Chief Financial Officer Joe Harris insist they will do what is necessary to bring the bond rating back up.

But what about standing up to Standard and Poor’s, Moody’s and Fitch—the rating companies that with a thumbs-up or thumbs-down can throw a city administration into a panic? They are private, for-profit, unregulated entities that create nothing of value. Didn’t these same rating firms give high ratings to those inventive and now worthless repackaged mortgage investment schemes? Didn’t they downgrade AIG, destroying its ability to insure?

The mayor, as the executive officer, has the power and the responsibility to ask for federal emergency assistance in the case of a disaster. Whether that’s a hurricane or a hatchet job by bank and corporate interests trying to squeeze more profit from Detroit workers, the devastation is the same. □



# DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.'S LEGACY

## Lessons from the past & today's challenges



By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Two fightback conferences will be held, in New York City on Jan. 17 and in Los Angeles on Jan. 24, in order to organize around the current economic crisis. In Detroit on Jan. 19, the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. rally and march will take place again. This demonstration over the last five years has consistently linked the ongoing wars of occupation in Afghanistan and Iraq with the growing crisis in the cities.

Many activities will cite the recent U.S. presidential election of Barack Obama as a fulfillment, at least in part, of the goals of the civil rights struggle of the 1950s and 1960s.

Nonetheless, in this important year of commemoration of the 80th birthday of the late civil rights and anti-war martyr, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the ascendancy of the country's first African-American president, the U.S. is

experiencing the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

During 2008, 2.6 million workers were thrown out of their jobs. Workers lost trillions of dollars through the theft of their jobs, homes, health care programs, forced taxpayer bailouts of financial institutions and the evaporation of their pension funds.

A wave of repressive attacks is being launched against the nationally oppressed, women, LGBT communities and organized as well as unorganized labor. The cold-blooded fatal shooting of Oscar Grant by Oakland transit police Jan. 1 symbolized the state's response to the people in the current period. Another African American, Adolf Grimes III, died the same day after being shot 14 times by the New Orleans police, with 12 of those shots in the back.

The funding and passage of Proposition 8 in California illustrated how the right wing will use popular demands for equality as a target not only to attack the rights of all working families, but also to divide

workers who need a united approach to fight the current assault on their living standards. After handing over \$750 billion of workers' tax dollars to the bankers last fall, the U.S. Congress has set strenuous conditions on a loan to the auto industry, conditions that are designed to break the UAW and reverse the gains won over the last several decades.

Consequently, the 2009 MLK Day activities take on added significance despite efforts to distort and conceal the true legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. and the African-American social movements of the 1960s.

After World War II, the struggle against Jim Crow racism and lynching intensified. Even during the war, organizations within the African-American community fought against discrimination in the war industries and within the military itself. By the conclusion of the 1940s, African Americans, particularly those in the labor movement, were demanding an immediate end to job discrimination, inferior education and residential segregation.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Civil Rights Congress and the National

Negro Labor Councils and others were labeled as subversive and subjected to the wave of anti-communist hysteria that swept the country during this period. These militant groups had firm ties to the left, including the Communist Party, and were destroyed along with many others during the "McCarthy era."

Nonetheless, a new wave of civil rights activities emerged after the 1954 Supreme Court decision of Brown vs. Topeka, which declared segregated educational systems as unconstitutional. In 1955, the lynching of a 14-year-old Black youth, Emmett Till, in Mississippi created the political conditions for the Montgomery Bus Boycott struggle in 1955-56.

Then came the appearance of civil rights leaders such as Rosa Parks and E.D. Nixon, both of whom had worked in the labor movement through the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. Within this context Dr. King emerged as the principal spokesperson for the civil rights movement.

### National oppression, class struggle, fightback today

Between 1957 and 1965, when the Voting Rights Act was won after the struggles in

## Amid capitalist crisis What can win JOBS?

Continued from page 1

tainment industries have higher sales.

Instead, December saw the biggest decline in retail sales since record keeping began in 1970, despite price-slashing sales of 50 to 70 percent off and buy-one-get-one-free offers. The International Council of Shopping Centers estimated that 148,000 retail stores shut down in 2008. It projected that another 73,100 retail stores will shut down in the first six months of 2009. The closures would result in the loss of 625,000 to 800,000 retail jobs. (Washington Post, Jan. 9)

### 'Stimulus program' smaller than a band-aid

Considering the catastrophic wave of unemployment, with at least 20 million jobless or severely underemployed right now, and the prospects for a massive increase in the coming period, all the speculation about whether the "stimulus package" will add 3 million or 3.5 million jobs over the next two years seems utterly inadequate.

The government figure of 11.1 million unemployed, or 7.2 percent, is based upon

a workforce of 154 million. The more realistic "total unemployment" figure cited above of 13.4 percent equals 20.6 million, according to the government.

Furthermore, the stimulus package now being projected amounts to \$775 billion. Of this, 40 percent is in tax cuts, which are not necessarily going to create jobs. And, worst of all, 90 percent of the spending is to go to private capitalists. So it is largely a handout to the capitalists in the hope that they will create enough jobs.

With all the talk about studying the New Deal, this program takes an opposite approach to that of the Roosevelt administration. While the New Deal was purely a band-aid, filled with limitations and flaws and calculated to save capitalism by preventing a mass uprising of the workers, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) nevertheless provided direct jobs to 8 million workers during the decade, or one-fifth of the workforce. At any given time, anywhere from 2 million to 3 million workers were employed by the government in these programs—the equivalent of 9 million to 10 million today.

The present plans for government spending set up a situation in which some 20 million unemployed workers will have to compete for 1 million to 1.5 million jobs in the coming year—assuming that the job creation projections are anywhere near correct. Such a situation in which workers are desperately seeking scarce jobs will tend to lower wages, set worker against worker and help the bosses.

The workers should of course take advantage of any opportunity to get new jobs created to help feed themselves and their families. But they must not sit back and let the economic "experts" in Washington and Wall Street dictate the terms of the economic package. They must get organized to impose their own economic demands on the capitalist government.

They could start by demanding that every nickel of the more than \$1 trillion already given to the banks be taken back and made available for jobs and services to the workers and the communities. The banks are so arrogant that they won't even tell the government what they are doing with this money.

### From bailout to fightback

The struggle is in its early stages and the workers are on the defensive. It is natural that at this stage popular organizations want to take advantage of the term "bailout" to expose the handouts to the banks and the bosses. But, as the struggle progresses, the concept of the capitalist government bailing out the people has to be shifted to the concept of the workers fighting back.

The funds to stem the crisis have to be put under the supervision of the workers, the unions, community organizations and other mass organizations—and not the bosses. It is the masses who are suffering from the crisis. They should be empowered to deal with it.

Only the masses will enforce a living wage, job guarantees, union rights, anti-racist practices and rights for women workers. The capitalists are skilled and experienced at manipulating government subsidies that are supposed to go for creating jobs. Instead they turn things around to maximize their profits. Relying on profiteering capitalists—and there is no other kind!—to save the working class is the worst possible course to pursue.

There must be a movement toward creating organs of popular power at the local, regional and national level to stop the layoffs and defend the workers' right to a job; to demand a guarantee of jobs or income; an end to foreclosures and evictions; to organize the unemployed and the employed into a united movement demanding jobs for all.

As the crisis unfolds, the question must be raised, what is the cause of the crisis? Paul Krugman, a liberal economist, cites the fact that the U.S. economy could create \$30 trillion worth of goods and services in the next two years. That would be sufficient to vastly reduce unemployment.

Krugman, who recently won a Nobel Prize for economics, restricted his commentary to a criticism of Barack Obama's

"**Low-Wage Capitalism** by Fred Goldstein is a most timely and important work,

as the working class prepares for a 'fightback' during the greatest crisis of capitalism since the great depression."

— CLARENCE THOMAS

Executive Board member, ILWU Local 10 and  
Co-chair of the Million Worker March Movement

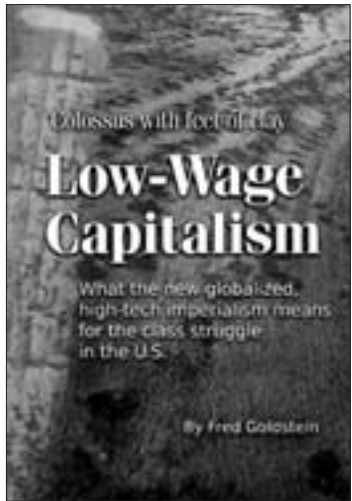
## Low-Wage Capitalism

Timely new book by Fred Goldstein describes in sweeping detail the drastic effect on the working class of new technology and the restructuring of global capitalism in the post-Soviet era. It uses Karl Marx's law of wages and other findings to show that these developments are not only continuing to drive down wages but are creating the material basis for future social upheaval. The analysis rests on three basic developments in the last three decades:

- The world's workforce available to exploitation by transnational capitalist corporations doubled in the wake of the collapse of the USSR and Eastern Europe.

- The technological revolutions of the digital age, in both production and communications, have allowed transnational corporations to destroy high-wage jobs and simultaneously expand the global workforce to generate a worldwide wage competition.
- The decline in the economic condition of the workers, driven by the laws of capitalism and the capitalist class, is leading to the end of working-class compromise and retreat and must end up in a profound revival of the struggle against capital.

Order online at [www.Leftbooks.com](http://www.Leftbooks.com)



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PHOTO: ERNEST WITHERS

Above, Memphis sanitation workers on strike, 1968.

Far right, Dr. King in Memphis, 1968.



the South demanding universal suffrage, the movement out of necessity had to shift toward economic exploitation and oppression in both the rural and urban areas.

However, what is often not acknowledged is that King, labeled by bourgeois writers as middle-class, in actuality came from a working-class background.

A working-class historian, Michael K. Honey, points out in his book “Going Down Jericho Road: The Memphis Strike, Martin Luther King’s Last Campaign,” that “White journalists may have seen the well-dressed, highly educated, eloquent ‘Dr. King’ as the quintessential middle-class leader, but he came from a line of people, including slaves, who struggled fiercely against poverty and Jim Crow. His grandmother took in washing and ironing for whites but was not afraid to beat up a white man who had assaulted her son, Martin’s father. Martin’s grandfather on his maternal side, A.D. Williams, lost his

thumb in a sawmill accident. He escaped from plantations and peonage in the countryside by migrating to Atlanta and turning a minuscule congregation of former slaves at Ebenezer Baptist Church into one of the city’s largest black churches.” (pp. 23-24).

In June 1966, King marched with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in Mississippi when the slogan for Black Power was raised by SNCC leaders Willie Ricks and Stokely Carmichael (a.k.a. Kwame Toure). King did not fully accept the new slogan but stated that if the cry for Black Power meant “amassing political and economic power to achieve our goals ... a belief in ourselves and our heritage,” then he would support it. (Honey, p. 89.)

Despite King’s continued belief in the possibility of social change through non-violent direct action, according to Honey, “King did not blame the Black Power movement for riots, as many whites did; he blamed riots on the wall of white indifference and ‘winters of delay’ by the government in the War on Poverty.” (p. 89).

In Chicago, where King joined the ongoing struggle for open housing and equal employment during July 1966, the agitation around these demands would set off rebellions on the city’s West Side. The racist and violent response of white residents of segregated communities in Chicago that summer illustrated that resistance to fundamental change was not confined to the South.

By early 1967 King no longer remained silent in his opposition to the U.S. war against the Vietnamese people. He saw that the escalating defense budget of the Lyndon Johnson administration took vital resources away from the purported War on Poverty. Moreover, he understood that the struggle for civil rights and economic justice could not be won when the federal government waged wars of occupation against people struggling for national liberation and sovereignty.

Once King made the link between racial injustice, economic inequality and impe-

economic program. He brushed by the fundamental question. He did not bother to ask why, when there is the economic capacity to employ all the workers, is unemployment going through the roof?

The answer is that while the U.S. economy can produce \$30 trillion worth of goods and services, it is in the form of commodities that must be sold for profit and only for profit. Human need means nothing to capitalism.

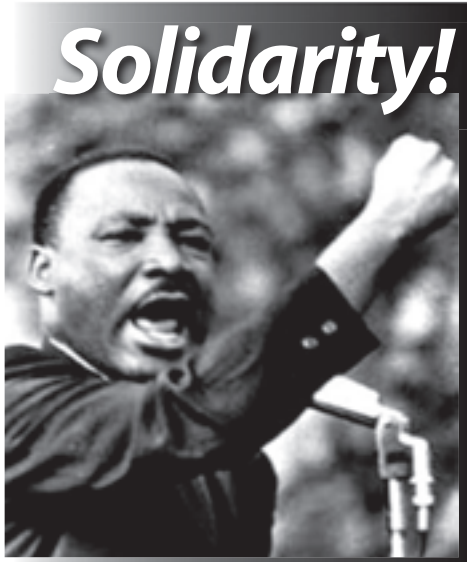
It is not as if the masses of people do not need the \$30 trillion worth of goods and services. In fact, right now they are being deprived of the very means of life by an economic storm artificially created by capitalism itself.

The masses have been impoverished for more than 30 years by union busting, wage and benefit cuts, massive destruction of jobs at living wages and their replacement by low-wage jobs. At the same time the corporations have vied with each other to capture markets and sell more and more—purely to make more profit. They fostered every kind of debt—credit card debt, mortgage debt, auto loan debt and so on—to keep the profits rolling in.

Finally the entire edifice has come crashing down in a crisis of capitalist overproduction. There are too many autos to sell at a profit. There are too many houses to sell at a profit. There is too much steel to sell at a profit. And so on. It has led to the wave of layoffs, foreclosures, evictions, hunger and homelessness.

As a system of exploitation for profit, capitalism itself is at the bottom of the crisis. As the workers and the oppressed awake to demand their rights, the ultimate aim must be the destruction of capitalism and the erection of a system run for human need, not for profit. That system is socialism.

Goldstein is the author of the recently published book “Low-Wage Capitalism: Colossus with Feet of Clay.” See [low-wagecapitalism.com](http://low-wagecapitalism.com) for information about the book and how to order it.



- Panels • Invited Guests • Breakouts
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rialist war, he became an even greater threat to the U.S. ruling class. In 1967 more urban rebellions occurred revealing the social inadequacy of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. By late 1967 King and his cohorts in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) had drafted plans for a National Poor People’s Campaign that would occupy Washington, D.C., until action was taken to eradicate poverty and create a guaranteed annual income in the U.S.

Dr. King supported the sanitation workers’ strike in Memphis during the early months of 1968. Over 1,300 African-American employees of the public works department had walked off the job in February 1968 demanding union recognition under AFSCME. The strike had been prompted by the deaths of two workers, crushed in a garbage truck after being denied the right to wait inside a city office during a thunderstorm.

The strike galvanized Memphis, leading to the formation of a broad-based strike committee. King came to Memphis in mid-March and immediately recognized that the strike represented the emerging phase of the African-American struggle that joined the fight for economic justice with the efforts to end racism completely. King was assassinated in Memphis on April 4.

King’s martyrdom sparked rebellions in 125 U.S. cities. Even though the Poor People’s Campaign did occupy Washington that summer, it was eventually crushed at the aegis of the Johnson administration.

When the Richard Nixon administration took power in early 1969, political repression escalated and effectively criminalized the African-American struggle for political and economic power.

All indications suggest that 2009 will be a significant year in the struggle to build an effective U.S. fightback movement. Even bourgeois economists are predicting that up to 10 million jobs may be lost in the coming year. More workers will lose their homes through evictions and foreclosures. The police apparatus will intensify repression aimed at suppressing the mass actions that occur in response to the worsening crisis.

This is why the fightback conferences in New York and Los Angeles, along with other mass actions, take on added significance. The U.S. ruling class will continue its wars abroad in Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and Colombia as well as its support for Israel in its genocidal onslaught against the Palestinian people. The most militant and organized sections of the movement must take up the challenge to build broader alliances that link the fight against the economic crisis with the anti-imperialist and anti-war struggle.

The contradictions of capitalism should be emphasized and the need for a socialist alternative can be advanced. Capitalism provides no real solutions for reversing the declining quality of life for the workers and the oppressed. This political crisis within the ideological foundations of the exploitative system provides an excellent opportunity for the propagation of bold ideas and political initiatives. □

## In Commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.’S BIRTHDAY

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‘Let Gaza live!’

Protests continue throughout U.S.

By Cheryl LaBash

As of Jan. 13, protests, vigils and mass marches are continuing throughout the U.S. against Israel’s vicious assault on Gaza.

Palestinian, Arab and Muslim communities are gaining allies to their strong outcry and are beginning to target U.S. corporations profiting from or supporting Israeli apartheid.

In Atlanta on Jan. 5, street demonstrations continued at the Israeli consulate, marching through rush-hour traffic past Starbucks, the office of Rep. John Lewis—who voted for a congressional “support for Israel” resolution the day before—and CNN headquarters. Kali Akuno, of the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement and U.S. Human Rights Network, likened the struggle of Katrina/Rita survivors to return to the U.S. Gulf Coast to the Palestinian right of return.

As classes resumed in Cincinnati and Seattle, events were held on some campuses with increasing activism.

More than 200 protesters demonstrated against U.S.-backed Israeli aggression at the Oklahoma Capitol Jan. 6. The majority of the protesters were Muslim-American, but Christians, Jews and non-religious folks also expressed their outrage at the ongoing genocide of Palestinians.

In Charlotte, N.C., demonstrations on Jan. 7, 10 and 11 brought out from 50 to 100 protesters each day to chant and hold signs at busy intersections, including chanting down a pro-U.S./Israel rally. On Jan. 9, 16 people delivered a protest letter to Rep. Sue Myrick’s office.

Tucson, Ariz., has seen daily demonstrations since Jan. 4, when a group of 185 people countered a Zionist “Stand with Israel” rally. The demonstrations attract from 20 to 50 people at busy intersections during the evening rush hour. On Jan. 9, 100 people with a sea of Palestinian flags and “Let Gaza live” signs were met with honks of support, raised fists and peace signs from passing motorists and pedestrians.

On Jan. 10 thousands of Arab, Palestinian, Muslim, Jewish, Christian and progressive individuals, families



and organizations participated in the Rally and March for Gaza in downtown San Francisco, organized by the Free Palestine Alliance and the ANSWER Coalition. A woman spoke in solidarity with the family and community of African-American 22-year-old Oscar Grant, who was fatally shot in the back on Jan. 1 by a transit cop while he lay face down and handcuffed on a train platform.

A protest drew more than 100 to the downtown Buffalo, N.Y., office of Sen. Charles Schumer on Jan. 8. When police diverted rush-hour traffic from passing by the demonstration, the rally became a march to City Hall instead. However, the outrage at continuing Israeli war crimes in Gaza couldn’t be contained in one protest, and another demonstration was held the following day.

More than 15,000 people rallied in Times Square in New York City on Jan. 11. The crowd, which was filled with families and youth, was enraged at the killing of more than 800 Palestinians and the horrific wounding of thousands more.

Activists from anti-war and working-class movements joined people from the Palestinian, Arab and Muslim communities. Many from the Latina/o community were present, linking attacks on immigrants with the struggle of the Palestinians. One sign stated, “No more walls in Palestine or Mexico.” Another declared, “Mexico loves Gaza.” Teresa Gutierrez, a leader of the May 1st Coalition for Immigrant Rights, noted the solidarity that Venezuela has shown. “When [Venezuelan President] Hugo Chávez expelled the Israeli Consulate, he was speaking for all of us,” she said to cheers from the crowd.

A representative of the December 12th Movement and

Blacks Against Genocide compared the 60 years of oppression of Palestinians with slavery and Jim Crow laws in the U.S. and apartheid in South Africa.

The protesters marched past the New York Times and Time Warner offices to CNN, chanting “CNN, New York Times, stop hiding Israeli crimes.”

The police were hostile throughout the day, pushing people off the sidewalks into barricades that lined the streets. People leaving the demonstration were attacked and pepper sprayed, others were pushed and struck. One provocateur grabbed a Palestinian flag and began trampling on it. When people tried to retrieve it they were attacked; the police arrested nine of them, including a 16-year-old.

After nearly 30 hours in lockup—six hours over the legal limit—the nine young Arabs were released on their own recognizance just before midnight on Jan. 12. All had been stomped and beaten and weren’t fed in the jail. Six were charged with felonies, three with misdemeanors. Court dates have been set for April 14 and 16.

The police attacks were supported by Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who earlier in the week had rushed to Israel to express support for Israel’s killing of Palestinians. On Jan. 7 hundreds gathered in front of City Hall to show their outrage against Bloomberg, throwing their shoes at a billboard of him and then marching in a cold rainfall to the federal building.

With chants of “When people are occupied, resistance is justified!” rally organizers estimate that up to 30,000 marched in Washington, D.C., Jan. 10 to protest the U.S.-backed Israeli occupation and military invasion of the Gaza strip.

Rally speakers included former U.S. Congressperson Cynthia McKinney, who recently attempted to bring aid to Gaza with the Free Gaza Movement, only to have the boat she was on repeatedly rammed by Israeli ships. McKinney challenged the U.S. media for their censorship of the carnage in Gaza.

“They are witness to 15 days of war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. We don’t see the

images. They are neatly censored from our view in this country,” McKinney noted.

After the rally a spirited, militant march wove its way past the White House and the offices of Lockheed Martin, Caterpillar and the Washington Post. Hail, sleet and freezing rain never dampened the predominantly Palestinian marchers’ resolve.

The demonstration was called by the ANSWER Coalition; the Muslim American Society Freedom Foundation; the Free Palestine Alliance; the National Council of Arab Americans; and Al-Awda, the Palestine Right to Return Coalition.

“Let Gaza Live!” was the main slogan on Jan. 10 when thousands rallied and marched at the Westwood Federal Building in Los Angeles. The protest, part of a national call for coordinated actions, was sponsored and endorsed by many organizations, including Al-Awda, the Palestinian American Women Association, the Muslim American Society, CAIR, the Free Palestine Alliance, ANSWER and the International Action Center. When Wilshire Boulevard was closed to vehicle traffic, the street filled with hundreds of Palestinian flags and some Venezuelan, Cuban and Ecuadoran flags. The march snaked through Westwood Village, near the campus of the University of California, Los Angeles. Although the turnout was largely from the Southern California Arab populations, there was also a strong presence from the anti-war movement.

In Boston, on Jan. 10 about 1,000 demonstrated in a rally called by the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. Coffins and signs represented those who have died in Gaza. Protesters marched through downtown Boston’s shopping district, past a military recruiter’s office and the Israeli Consulate, ending in a short rally in Copley Square. That evening, the International Action Center hosted a forum on Gaza where Palestinian activist Ahmad Kawash, Jewish labor leader Steve Kirschbaum and City Councilor Chuck Turner all expressed solidarity with the Palestinian people. Turner will introduce a resolution into the Boston City Council against the genocide in Gaza.

On Jan. 9 a trans-led protest against state violence in Providence, R.I., called by What Queer?!, mourned the then-800 dead in Gaza, along with those suffering at the hands of the state, from undocumented workers to Oscar Grant in Oakland and “teenagers who are coerced into joining the military.”

On Jan. 8 demonstrators filled the federal building plaza in downtown Detroit. Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims were joined by numerous progressive organizations including Jewish Voices for Peace, the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice and religious leaders. African-American bystanders warmly greeted the massive, militant march as it wound through downtown to an indoor rally at Central United Methodist Church.

About 100 people came out to the Ann Arbor, Mich., federal building on Jan. 2. Grand Rapids, Mich., reported vigils on Jan. 5 and 6 with a rally on Jan. 9. In Kalamazoo, Mich., daily vigils were held, with a rally on Jan. 9.

Contributors to this article include David Dixon, Ellie Dorritie, Imani Henry, Joan Marquardt, Dianne Mathiowetz, Frank Neisser, Oklahoma Independent Media Center (okimc.org), Betsey Plette, Bryan Pfeifer, Brenda Ryan, Gerry Scoppettuolo, Paul Teitelbaum, U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation (endtheoccupation.org) and Maggie Vascassenno.





Worldwide protests grow

Movement targets Israel for boycott, divestment, sanctions

By John Catalinotto

In the age of the Internet, sometimes it takes only two minutes to set an example for the world’s workers. That’s just what the Norwegian Locomotive Union did when they stopped all trains, trams and subways in Norway for 120 seconds on Jan. 8, telling passengers that they were staying in the station for that extra time in solidarity with the Palestinian people. Within days, the members of the COSATU trade union federation in South Africa were discussing in Cape Town how to bring that tactic into their country. The idea is to add two minutes each day the invasion and blockade continues. U.S.

Labor Against the War posted this on its site. As the railway workers’ action begins to gather steam, another struggle idea has spread from country to country. This is the call for “boycott, divestment and sanctions” targeting the Israeli state and its economy. Again in Cape Town at a march of 15,000 on Jan. 8, the South African Communist Party’s Richard Mamobolo put his party behind the call COSATU had made at a Johannesburg protest earlier for the South African government to expel the Israeli ambassador and implement sanctions against Israel. The week of activities in South Africa supported the right of the Palestinians to

resist. There were also protests in Nairobi, where police fired tear gas and used water cannons to disperse hundreds of Muslims who had gathered after Friday prayers, and in other cities in Kenya on Jan. 9. This call for boycott, divestment and sanctions, or BDS, was common to many of the protests the weekend of Jan. 9-11. More millions of people took to the streets around the world to demand the U.S.-backed Israeli war machine stop killing and pull back out of Gaza. Acting

Continued on page 10



Mombasa, Kenya, Jan. 1.



Oviedo, Spain, Jan. 10.

PHOTO: PATRICIO SUAREZ



Venice, Italy, Jan. 10.

PHOTO: FAUSTO SCHIAVETTO



Seoul, South Korea, Jan. 10.

PHOTO: OHMY NEWS

Gazans resist despite U.S.-Israeli war crimes

Continued from page 1

closed. The leaders of Hamas, the democratically elected Palestinian party that has been governing Gaza, have not buckled under and continue to insist that there can be no ceasefire until Israel withdraws its forces and opens the crossing points with Egypt. Hamas and the Palestinian people continue to stand strong even after 18 months of an Israeli blockade of Gaza and more than two weeks of the current all-out military assault. Relief agencies rebuke Israel While Israel claims it is carrying out these ground and air attacks in a “humanitarian” way, it even prevents widely recognized international aid agencies from providing assistance. Both the Red Cross and the U.N. Relief and Works Agency temporarily halted their relief operations after their workers were separately fired upon by Israeli forces, with two U.N. workers killed. On Jan. 8 the International Committee of the Red Cross issued a sharp and rare rebuke to Israel after its forces denied the ICRC and the Palestine Red Crescent Society access to the Zaytun neighborhood, which had been shelled by Israeli troops, for four days. The statement reports: “The ICRC/PRCS team found four small children next to their dead mothers in one of the houses. They were too weak to stand up on their own. One man was also found alive, too weak to stand up. In all there were at least 12 corpses lying on mattresses. ... Israeli soldiers ... ordered the rescue team to leave the area which they refused to do.” (icrc.org) The statement calls the delay in access “unacceptable” and demands that the Israeli military grant it and PRCS ambulances safe passage and access to search for the wounded.

Flouting the facts, Israel claimed it works “in close co-operation with international aid organizations during the fighting so that civilians can be provided with assistance.” (Daily Telegraph, Jan. 9) Refugees bombed, many killed Meanwhile, the Israeli “Defense” Forces continue their sordid history of bombing and shelling refugee locations. At a U.N.-run school where hundreds of Palestinians were seeking refuge, Israeli tank shells killed at least 40 people on Jan. 6. And two days earlier, according to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Israeli foot soldiers evacuated approximately 110 Palestinians into a single-residence house in Zeitoun (half of whom were children) warning them to stay indoors. Twenty-four hours later, Israeli forces shelled the home repeatedly, killing approximately 30.” (BBC, Jan. 9) With the goal of destroying any manifestation of the democratically elected Palestinian state led by Hamas, Israeli forces have also targeted the civilian infrastructure, including homes, neighborhoods, schools, mosques, prisons, hospitals, sewage treatment and the only mental health clinic in Gaza. In an attempt to keep the world from seeing its atrocities in Gaza, Israel has banned media access to the densely populated, bombarded and blockaded strip. But, the New York Times admits, the reporters have “full access to Israeli political and military commentators eager to show them around southern Israel, where Hamas rockets have been terrorizing civilians. A slew of private groups financed mostly by Americans are helping guide the press around Israel.” (Jan. 6) Israel’s own Supreme Court ruled on Dec. 31 against this ban, probably fearing that more people would now turn to Arab sources for the news.

U.S. fans the flames

While people around the world, with increasing militancy, protest the atrocities being committed by Israel, the U.S. is belligerently proclaiming its support for the racist settler state. The Democratic-led U.S. Senate unanimously passed a resolution Jan. 8 expressing “vigorous support and unwavering commitment to the welfare, security, and survival of the State of Israel.” Completely one-sided, the resolution places full blame for the crisis in Gaza on Hamas and makes a bevy of demands on it but none on Israel. (Salon.com) The next day a similar resolution was passed by the House, 390 to 5. (Reuters) President-elect Barack Obama broke his conspicuous silence on the situation in Gaza on Jan. 6, only to make a mild statement expressing his concern about “the loss of civilian life in Gaza and Israel.” Israel has suffered three civilian deaths to Gaza’s hundreds. Such a statement, however, draws an equal sign between oppressor and oppressed. Worldwide demonstrations have denounced the U.S. support of Israel, its client state in the Middle East. Israel is the largest recipient of U.S. military aid, and the weapons being used to rain terror on the people of Gaza—including white phosphorous munitions, which have been banned for use in civilian areas—are made in the U.S. Israel more isolated Despite the intentions of both Tel Aviv and Washington, the all-out, genocidal blitzkrieg against the people of Gaza has isolated Israel more than ever. The U.N. Human Rights Council, meeting in Geneva on Jan. 12, passed a resolution which “strongly condemns the ongoing Israeli military operations ... which have resulted in massive violations of human rights of the Palestinian people and systematic destruction of the Palestinian

infrastructure.” The resolution, which was drafted by Arab, Asian and African countries, passed 33 to 1 with 13 abstentions; Canada cast the only “no” vote. (Agence France-Presse) As the number of deaths at Israel’s hands continues to rise, the truth of the situation in Gaza and Palestine is becoming more and more exposed. While proclaiming it acts in self-defense, Israel has oppressed the Palestinian people for 60 years, driving them out of their homes and splitting their land into ever-smaller fragments. It prevents Palestinian refugees and their descendants from returning home. The oppressed in this case are clearly the Palestinians, who have suffered from daily state terror and violence and have the right to defend themselves in whatever way they can. Israel alleges it had to launch this murderous offensive because Hamas violated a ceasefire. However, while Hamas adhered to the ceasefire for five months, it was never honored by Israel. Rather than open border crossings into Gaza, as the ceasefire stipulated, Israel tightened the blockade, cutting off electricity, water and access to supplies for the 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza. Thirty Gazans were killed by Israeli planes and missiles during the ceasefire—prompting Hamas to finally respond by firing a few rockets into Israel. It was their only way to draw world attention to the deadly siege going on. The purpose of the attack on Gaza, as with all these massacres, is to quell resistance. However, the Palestinians have proven time and time again that this will never happen. They are fighting back bravely and their fighters have the support of the people, as many news accounts show. Meanwhile, throughout the world, people yearning for justice are finding inspiration in the Palestinian struggle. □





# How to help Gaza

Anyone who watches the Israeli slaughter in Gaza, armed and backed by the U.S. government, and understands what is behind it will want to do what is possible to make it stop. As in any wars waged by a well-armed oppressor with a racist ideology, that is easier said than done. Mere symbolic protest seems inadequate. One wants not only to shout at the Israeli and U.S. criminals and to counteract the slander and demonization of Hamas, the organization now leading the defense of Gaza, but to lend more substantial support.

A recent appeal to the world movement by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, an organization with a long history of struggle, calls for more mass actions, and adds:

“The PFLP salutes the hundreds of thousands internationally who have continued to take to the streets, and the millions in the Arab homeland who have done so as well.”

Mentioning many of the places there have been protests, it continues, “In various cities, demonstrators have surrounded Israeli embassies, as well as U.S. and Egyptian embassies, besieging them with a demand for justice and an end to the massacres and siege. These actions and others have been impacting and providing support to the steadfastness of the Palestinian resistance, and we can feel the power and commitment of such actions, which strengthens the morale of all of our people facing massacres and siege.”

The PFLP also calls for “the broadest mass demonstrations and the escalation

of popular international action, especially the takeover of the embassies of the occupier,” as was done, for example, by Jewish women in Toronto.

Its most specific appeal was to “the Greek movement, the Greek people and all international progressive forces to halt the planned shipment of U.S. arms to Israel from the Greek port of Astakos.” Some 3,000 tons of U.S. arms were due to be shipped from there to Israel. Much to their credit, some left-wing Greek parties that oppose the Greek government plan to hold protests Jan. 15 and 16 at Astakos. They will go ahead with the actions, even though the Pentagon has since said it changed its plans. The shipment will now allegedly avoid Greece. The Pentagon spokesperson added that the Greek government “had some issue” with the shipment.

It is possible to continue the mass mobilizations. It is possible to give people-to-people humanitarian aid to Gaza. It is possible in the longer term to harness the worldwide anger against the U.S. and Israeli war criminals and organize for boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel, as many have suggested. It should also be possible, depending on circumstances, to obstruct Israeli war diplomacy as suggested.

And it is also possible, where class-consciousness and anti-imperialist activity is at a high level, to have specific and concrete acts of internationalist solidarity that throw a wrench in the U.S.-Israeli war machine.

All these actions can help. May they grow and spread around the world, including right here in the U.S. □

## Worldwide protests grow Movement targets Israel for boycott, divestment, sanctions

*Continued from page 9*

as though they could completely ignore the cry of these millions without consequence, the Israelis continued to rain death on Gaza.

While in the first week almost all protests were at Israeli consulates and embassies, the second week an official U.S. building was likely to be the target.

Thousands more protested in Tshwane, Durban and Port Elizabeth in South Africa on Jan. 9, where they chanted support for Hugo Chávez, president of Venezuela. People all over the world were inspired when Chávez expelled the Israeli ambassador and broke relations with Israel over the bloody assault in Gaza.

In Brussels, Belgium, where 70,000 mostly Arab people marched on Jan. 11, their main message was for the European Union to suspend the Association Agreement it currently has with Israel, as long as its massacres and blockade of Gaza continue. One group held a banner with the slogan “Hugo Chávez, friend of the Palestinian people,” in Spanish and Arabic.

Chávez and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in a phone conversation called for organizing a global summit to find a resolution to end the Gaza catastrophe.

### ‘Boycott Israel’

A protest of 25,000 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on Jan. 6 was the largest in Latin America. Another 1,000 people protested in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on Jan. 8, and demanded that Brazil break diplomatic relations with the terrorist state of Israel, cancel the commercial treaty between Brazil and Israel, and begin an international campaign of boycotting the products of Zionist corporations.

In Barcelona, Spain, where organizers say 200,000 marched, and in Madrid, where 250,000 gathered, it was obvious that demonstrations were so huge that many non-Arabs and non-Muslims were joining in a show of solidarity. The main slogan of the Barcelona march was “Stop the massacre in Gaza: Boycott Israel!” Throughout the rest of the Spanish state, there were smaller but significant marches in Burgos, Avila, Valencia, Oviedo, Malaga and Las Palmas in the Canary Islands.

In France, too, the protests grew larger, with more than 100,000 in Paris and about the same total in many cities in the rest of the country on Jan. 10.

In Germany the major actions were 10,000 in Duisberg and 8,500 in Berlin on Jan. 10.

There was another strong protest of tens of thousands in downtown London, England, that ended with clashes between demonstrators and the police. There were also protests of 10,000 in Edinburgh, Scotland, where demonstrators dumped red paint and 300 pairs of shoes at the U.S. Consulate.

There were smaller protests in Sweden and Norway, and one for the first time in Warsaw, Poland. In Italy there were demonstrations in Rome, Milan, Vicenza, Verona, Venezia and other cities, totaling in the tens of thousands. Some 7,000 demonstrated in Bern, Switzerland, and 2,000 in Athens, Greece.

In South Korea on Jan. 10, some 300 people demonstrated to stop Israel’s killing of the people of Gaza, called out by

75 civil society organizations, unions and progressive parties.

### Anger grows

In the Arab and Muslim world, the demonstrations took a sharper edge. Some 2,000 protesters in the Pakistani port city of Karachi burned U.S. flags and chanted anti-Israel slogans. Then several hundred of them marched on the U.S. Consulate. Senior police official Ameer Sheikh claimed the protesters were carrying bricks, stones and clubs.

In Malaysia, the police arrested 21 people, including Klang MP Charles Santiago and several top leaders of the Malaysian Socialist Party (PSM), at an anti-war vigil at Dataran Merdeka, Kuala Lumpur.

In Turkey some of the strongest actions have taken place. Anti-war and anti-racist movement activists, social organizations, nongovernmental organizations, solidarity committees, trade unions and parties took to the streets. They have been organizing daily protests since Dec. 28 in almost every Turkish city, including Istanbul, Ankara, İzmir and Adana. There were protests at the Israeli Embassy and consulates, plus marches on the main streets of big cities.

Demonstrators in Turkey showed their solidarity with the Palestinians of Gaza and expressed the besieged and occupied population’s right to resist. They recognized the Israeli state as the direct criminal, the local gendarme acting as an appendage of world imperialism—particularly U.S. imperialism but also that of the European Union. (Global Peace and Justice Coalition of Turkey) Turkish fans even ran an Israeli basketball team off the court.

An estimated 2,500 Lebanese and Palestinians meanwhile protested peacefully in downtown Beirut, waving Palestinian flags and calling on the international community to intervene in the Israeli attack. Leftist participants set fire to a large Israeli flag, while children taking part in the protest held bloody dolls representing Palestinian children killed in Gaza.

In Syria, demonstrators accused Arab leaders of being complicit in the Gaza assault.

### Jewish opposition to Gaza assault

More open Jewish opposition worldwide to Israeli policies has surfaced following the assault on Gaza than during any earlier U.S.-backed Israeli war or incursion. A Jewish women’s group in Toronto, Canada, occupied the Israeli Consulate on Jan. 8 “in solidarity with the 1.5 million people of Gaza and to ensure that Jewish voices against the massacre in Gaza are being heard,” according to their statement.

The French Jewish Union for Peace spoke up early against the assault on Gaza. In Britain, a group of Jewish intellectuals started a petition against the ongoing assault, and in the United States, Jewish activists held a news conference Jan. 6 at Union Square Park in New York. On Jan. 12 the group Jews Against the Occupation held a protest of 150 people before the Israeli Consulate in New York.

*Paloma Valverde, Dirk Adriaensens, Bert de Belder, Fausto Schiavetto, Paola Manduca, Jorge Figueiredo, Manuel Raposo, Jay Hauben, Berta Joubert-Ceci, David Karvala and others contributed to this report.*



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# Hamas political leader: ‘This brutality will never break our will’

*The following statement by Khalid Mish'al, head of the Hamas political bureau, was published in The Guardian of Britain on Jan. 6.*

For 18 months my people in Gaza have been under siege, incarcerated inside the world's biggest prison, sealed off from land, air and sea, caged and starved, denied even medication for our sick. After the slow death policy came the bombardment. In this most densely populated of places, nothing has been spared Israel's warplanes, from government buildings to homes, mosques, hospitals, schools and markets. More than 540 have been killed and thousands permanently maimed. A third are women and children. Whole families have been massacred, some while they slept.

This river of blood is being shed under lies and false pretexts. For six months we in Hamas observed the ceasefire. Israel broke it repeatedly from the start. Israel was required to open crossings to Gaza and extend the truce to the West Bank. It proceeded to tighten its deadly siege of Gaza, repeatedly cutting electricity and water supplies. The collective punishment did not halt, but accelerated—as did the assassinations and killings. Thirty Gazans were killed by Israeli fire and hundreds of patients died as a direct effect of the siege during the so-called ceasefire. Israel enjoyed a period of calm.

Our people did not. When this broken truce neared its end, we expressed our readiness for a new comprehensive truce in return for lifting the blockade and opening all Gaza border crossings, including Rafah. Our calls fell on deaf ears. Yet still we would be willing to begin a new truce on these terms following the complete withdrawal of the invading forces from Gaza.

No rockets have ever been fired from the West Bank. But 50 died and hundreds more were injured there last year at Israel's hands, while its expansionism proceeded relentlessly. We are meant to be content with shrinking scraps of territory, a handful of cantons at Israel's mercy, enclosed by it from all sides. The truth is Israel seeks a one-sided ceasefire, observed by my people alone, in return for siege, starvation, bombardment, assassinations, incursions and colonial settlement. What Israel wants is a gratuitous ceasefire.

The logic of those who demand that we stop our resistance is absurd. They absolve the aggressor and occupier—armed with the deadliest weapons of death and destruction—of responsibility, while blaming the victim, prisoner and occupied. Our modest, home-made rockets are our cry of protest to the world. Israel and its American and European sponsors want us to be killed in silence. But die in silence we will not.

What is being visited on Gaza today was visited on Yasser Arafat before. When he refused to bow to Israel's dictates, he was imprisoned in his Ramallah headquarters, surrounded by tanks for two years. When this failed to break his resolve, he was murdered by poisoning.

Gaza enters 2009 just as it did 2008: under Israeli fire. Between January and February of last year 140 Gazans died in air strikes. And just before it embarked on its failed military assault on Lebanon in July 2006, Israel rained thousands of shells on Gaza, killing 240. From Deir Yassin in 1948 to Gaza today, the list of Israel's crimes is long. The justifications change, but the reality is the same: colonial occupation, oppression and never-ending injustice. If this is the “free world” whose “values” Israel is defending, as its foreign minister Tzipi Livni alleges, then we want nothing to do with it.

Israel's leaders remain in the grip of confusion, unable to set clear goals for the attacks—from ousting the legitimately elected Hamas government and destroying its infrastructure, to stopping the rockets. As they fail to break Gaza's resistance the benchmark has been lowered. Now they speak of weakening Hamas

and limiting the resistance. But they will achieve neither. Gaza's people are more united than ever, determined not to be terrorized into submission. Our fighters, armed with the justice of their cause, have already caused many casualties among the occupation army and will fight on to defend their land and people. Nothing can defeat our will to be free.

Once again, Washington and Europe have opted to aid and abet the jailer, occupier and aggressor, and to condemn its victims. We hoped Barack Obama would break with George Bush's disastrous legacy but his start is not encouraging. While he swiftly moved to denounce the Mumbai attacks, he remains tongue-tied after 10 days of slaughter in Gaza. But my people are not alone. Millions of freedom-loving men and women stand by its struggle for justice and liberation—witness daily protests against Israeli aggression, not only in the Arab and Islamic region, but worldwide.

Israel will no doubt wreak untold destruction, death and suffering in Gaza. But it will meet the same fate in Gaza as it did in Lebanon. We will not be broken by siege and bombardment, and will never surrender to occupation. □

## Venezuela stands with Gaza!

In protest of the massacre of Palestinians in Gaza, Venezuela expelled the Israeli ambassador from its country on Dec. 6.

A government-issued statement declares: “In this tragic and outrageous time, the people of Venezuela express their unequivocal solidarity with the Palestinian people. ... The government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela categorically condemns the flagrant violations of the State of Israel to International Law, and denounces the use of State terrorism. ...

“Due to the aforementioned reasons, the government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has decided to expel the ambassador of Israel and part of the staff of the Embassy of Israel to Venezuela, thus reaffirming its vocation to peace and its demand to respect International Law. ...

“President Hugo Chávez, who has ... always opposed anti-Semitism and all kinds of discrimination and racism, calls on the fraternal Jewish people of the world to oppose these criminal policies of the State of Israel, which resemble the worst pages of the history of the 20th cen-



Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez holds newspaper reporting his expulsion of Israeli ambassador.

tury. With the genocide of the Palestinian people, the State of Israel will never be able to offer its people the perspective of a necessary and lasting peace.” (Agencia Bolivariana de Noticias, Jan. 6)

Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah, Secretary General of the Lebanese popular movement Hezbollah, lauded Chávez for the expulsions, saying “He did this because of his humanity, his sense of revolution.” (Press TV, Jan. 8)

On Jan. 11, Chávez further announced that Venezuela was sending 12.5 metric tons of medicine to Gaza. (Associated Press, Jan. 11)

—LeiLani Dowell

What YOU should know about the hidden war in CONGO
 –past & present
 By Abayomi Azikiwe Reprinted from Workers World

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By Monica Moorehead

The ongoing genocidal, criminal, U.S.-backed Israeli war on Gaza, entering its third week, continues to generate growing worldwide condemnation in many forms. The largest protests have taken place throughout the Middle East, where millions of outraged people have taken to the streets to show their solidarity with the heroic people of Gaza, Hamas and the Palestinian resistance in general. Israeli and U.S. embassies and consulates have been the main targets of many of these protests—and rightfully so.

These protests are taking place not only in the streets but in unexpected venues as well. A heroic example of this took place on Jan. 13 in Ankara, Turkey, inside a sports arena. When the Israeli basketball team, Bnei Hasharon, came on the court during a Eurocup game to play against Turk Telekom, hundreds of Turkish fans began to throw shoes at them, yelling “Israeli murderers, get out of Palestine!” Palestinian flags—which the fans had hidden in their clothing—were proudly displayed. ([www.edgeofsports.com](http://www.edgeofsports.com))

While this protest was taking place inside, outside 4,000 anti-Zionist protesters were turned back from entering the arena by thousands of police. Having

anticipated a protest against the Israeli team, the police had limited the numbers they let into the arena. What they did not anticipate was the angry crowd of fans, who had also planned to take off their shoes and throw them on the basketball court. Taking one's shoes off and throwing them is a display of major anger in the Middle East.

The Bnei Hasharon players were forced to flee to their locker room, where they stayed for two hours while fans battled the police. Many fans were physically removed from the arena and also arrested. When the police had restored “order,” Bnei Hasharon still refused to come back on the court to play, thereby forfeiting the game to the Turkish team.

Hopefully, this show of solidarity in Turkey with the Palestinians will inspire others around the world to confront Zionism wherever and in whatever form it rears its ugly head. □

### MUNDO OBRERO

## EEUU preparó el terreno para ataques de Israel

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enero, 2008) Entre es@s israelíes que sufren pobreza a causa del gobierno controlado por multimillonarios, son personas de avanzada edad, incluyendo a much@s sobrevivientes del Holocausto.

En años recientes, como las guerras constantes de Israel han tomado más y más de los fondos estatales, se han recortado extremadamente los servicios sociales.

Israel es una creación política artificial, impuesta sobre Palestina en 1948 por el imperialismo estadounidense y británico como una maniobra con el movimiento sionista reaccionario. Para el beneficio de todos los pueblos de esa región, Washington debe dejar de financiar y armar este régimen opresivo y sin ley.

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Soccer star Frederic Kanoute faces f ne for wearing this tee shirt in Seville, Spain.



# EEUU preparó el terreno para ataques de Israel

Por Deirdre Griswold

La respuesta de los gobiernos imperialistas a los atroces ataques de Israel contra el millón y medio de palestinos encerrados en Gaza muestra de nuevo quién en realidad lleva las riendas en Tel Aviv. Israel ha creado una desesperante crisis humanitaria que se hará sentir durante muchas décadas. Ha violado todo tipo de ley internacional sobre la violencia militar en contra de civiles. Ha violado sus propios acuerdos con los palestinos.

Sin embargo la “comunidad internacional” no ha hecho nada para detener los ataques. La gran oposición a este crimen monumental llega de los pueblos en las calles, no de los gobiernos.

Ningún otro país pequeño recibe un trato tan suave. Pero Israel no es solamente un país pequeño. Es un socio estratégico de la única súper potencia mundial, Estados Unidos.

La clase dominante estadounidense extrae cientos de miles de millones en ganancias por la explotación del petróleo del Medio Oriente. Si algún gobierno trata de defender su soberanía y mantener el control sobre sus propios recursos, Israel es usualmente el primero en amenazar con acciones militares, como lo ha hecho con Irán. Y recibe los favores que Washington le concede a sus mercenarios: un promedio de \$15 millones diarios en ayuda más un crédito ilimitado y acceso a negocios de costos exorbitantes.

Con Washington como respaldo, los gobernantes israelíes saben que no habrá ninguna resolución por parte del Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU que detenga la matanza. Ningún país árabe vecino podrá socorrer a sus hermanos y hermanas sin convertirse en objetivo de los aviones, tanques y bombas estadounidenses que ahora están destruyendo al pueblo de Gaza.

Los palestinos en Gaza ya han estado bajo un bloqueo económico por 18 meses. Todo ya estaba escaso, incluyendo alimentos, medicinas, equipos de hospital, combustible para la calefacción, cocinar, para la transportación y para los generadores. La electricidad solo estaba disponible unas pocas horas al día, el resto del tiempo no había luz, no había forma de recargar los teléfonos celulares, o las baterías para los radios, ni energía para las bombas de agua. Las instalaciones de saneamiento apenas funcionaban.

Y entonces el 27 de diciembre Israel comenzó su bombardeo desde el aire. Usando F-16 y “Apaches” helicópteros proporcionados por Estados Unidos, sistemáticamente apuntaba hacia los lugares donde la gente podía refugiarse.

Una semana después, el 3 de enero, sus tanques y sus tropas entraron por la frontera hasta las ciudades y pueblos de Gaza, precedidos por una lluvia de fósforo blanco.

El fósforo blanco es tan terrible que ha sido prohibido como arma. Quema a una temperatura muy alta y se adhiere fuertemente a la piel de forma que una pequeña cantidad que caiga sobre la piel de una

persona, sigue quemando hasta llegar al hueso. Estados Unidos utilizó fósforo y napalm contra el pueblo vietnamita, lo cual le valió denuncias por crímenes de guerra.

Israel sostiene que las bombas de fósforo fueron usadas solo para crear una “pantalla de humo” para cubrir el avance de sus tropas. Su ministra del exterior, Tzipi Livni, en una conferencia de prensa en París el 3 de enero, día en que comenzó la invasión, dijo que Israel tomó precauciones para proteger a los civiles y que no había necesidad de una tregua humanitaria ya que no existía una crisis humanitaria.

En la primera semana y media de la ofensiva, se calcula que los israelitas mataron a unas 560 personas e hirieron a miles más. La Agencia de Socorro de la ONU dice que por lo menos un cuarto de estas víctimas eran civiles. Pero esa cifra se elevó a más de 600 muertes para el 6 de enero cuando los morteros israelitas cayeron sobre un grupo de 350 personas que se habían reunido para protegerse cerca de la escuela de la ONU en el campo de refugiados Jabaliya.

Los israelitas aseveraron que los refugiados habían abierto fuego contra ellos, pero un oficial de la ONU confirmó que nadie en la concentración tenía armas. Los israelíes han bombardeado y/o disparado sobre edificios residenciales, mercados, mezquitas, hospitales y otras escuelas, incluyendo la prestigiosa Escuela Internacional Americana.

## Testigo ocular describe carnicería

Israel ha estrangulado a Gaza. Rehúsa permitir que entren los medios noticieros en la franja. Sin embargo, el servicio de noticias árabe Al-Jazeera pudo entrevistar a residentes de Gaza después de que comenzara el asalto por tierra.

Iyad Nasr de la Cruz Roja de la Ciudad de Gaza dijo a Al-Jazeera que “El tamaño de las operaciones y la cantidad de sufrimiento que vemos aquí es totalmente abrumador”.

John Holmes, jefe de la Agencia de Socorro de la ONU, dijo respondiendo a las declaraciones israelíes, “Esto es en nuestra opinión, una crisis humanitaria. Es muy difícil que yo encuentre otra manera de describirla, dada las condiciones en las cuales la población está viviendo”.

Holmes agregó que “se están utilizando municiones de racimo” y que fue “una presunción justa” que la mayoría de los civiles muertos eran mujeres y niños. (Al-Jazeera, 6 de enero)

El periódico Sydney Morning Herald publicó el 5 de enero un reporte de un testigo ocular desde el hospital Shifa en la Ciudad de Gaza —uno de los primeros reportes de esta clase que aparece en un periódico principal fuera del mundo árabe.

Taghreed El-Khodary escribió: “Las bajas en Shifa el domingo [4 de enero] —18 muertos, dijeron oficiales del hospital, entre los 30 reportados alrededor de Gaza—fueron mujeres, niños y hombres que se habían quedado con niños. Un cirujano dijo que había realizado cinco amputaciones.

“‘Yo no sé qué clase de armas está usando Israel’, dijo una enfermera, Ziad Abd al Jawwad de 41 años, que había trabajado 24 horas sin descansar. ‘Hay tantas amputaciones’. ...

“Por 10 días los médicos han luchado por mantener a Shifa en operación. Trabajadores de la limpieza limpian la sangre del suelo constantemente mientras que oficiales de seguridad de Hamas mantienen guardia. ...

“Mads Gilbert, un médico noruego que le fue permitido entrar a Gaza la semana pasada para prestar asistencia médica de urgencia, y que ha trabajado en muchas zonas de conflicto, dijo que la situación era lo peor que había visto. El hospital estaba falto de todo, dijo —monitores, anestesia, equipo quirúrgico, calentadores y repuestos. Las ventanas se habían roto por el bombardeo cercano y como el resto de Gaza, el ya escaso combustible se estaba agotando.”

## Israel utiliza ‘bunker busters’ hechas en USA

Y ahora otra terrible arma ha sido agregada al arsenal de Israel, gracias a Washington. El Jerusalem Post reportó el 30 de diciembre que sus pilotos habían dejado caer bombas GBU-39 “bunker-busters” [bombas de alta penetración] en Gaza durante la ofensiva actual. En septiembre, el Congreso de los EEUU aprobó la venta a Israel de 1000 de estas armas, cuya capacidad explosiva concentrada es ocho veces más fuerte que la de una bomba clásica.

Tales transacciones son llamadas ventas pero de hecho son regalos, porque Washington ha permitido que Israel acumule una deuda externa enorme sin pedir compensación. Hoy la deuda externa de Israel es el equivalente de un 99 por ciento de su producto doméstico bruto. La mitad de ella se le debe a los EEUU (CIA World Factbook)

Los israelitas dicen que estas bombas han sido utilizadas para destruir los túneles en Gaza durante la ofensiva actual. Dicen que su meta es la de poner un alto al contrabando de armas. Pero los túneles han sido utilizados para traer productos esenciales; entonces al destruirlos tiene el efecto de reforzar el bloqueo de Gaza.

La máquina propagandística de Israel, ayudada enormemente por los medios de comunicación supuestamente “objetivos” de los EEUU, intenta presentar este intenso bombardeo como un acto defensivo —como algo necesario para combatir los cohetes lanzados desde Gaza por militantes de Hamas. Las cifras, sin embargo, hablan por sí solas.

Mientras que en los primeros 10 días más de 500 palestinos murieron y miles más fueron heridos, solo cuatro israelíes murieron por los cohetes. El número de israelíes muertos se duplicó después de que empezó la invasión por tierra — pero solamente porque cuatro soldados israelíes fueron objeto del fuego de sus propios tanques mientras inspeccionaban edificios residenciales en el norte de Gaza. (New York Times, 6 de enero)

## Incitación a la guerra, tanto abierta como secretamente

La administración de Bush es flagrante en su apoyo por esta guerra brutal. El 3 de enero impidió que aún el llamado más suave por un cese al fuego fuera votado en el Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU.

Es totalmente hostil a Hamas — el partido que dirige la resistencia y que fue elegido abrumadoramente por el pueblo palestino en su última elección parlamentaria. Un documento interno estadounidense que fue recientemente revelado muestra que Estados Unidos clandestinamente prometió \$86 millones para “fortalecer y reformar elementos del sector de seguridad palestina” en oposición a Hamas, tratando así de poner las fuerzas palestinas unas en contra de la otra. (Reuters, 5 de enero)

Al notar que esta administración pronto se va, algunos de sus críticos están llamando el ataque de Israel sobre Gaza “el último crimen de guerra de Bush”.

Están esperando una política exterior menos belicosa bajo Barack Obama, quien todavía se ha abstenido de comentar sobre los ataques aéreos de Israel y su invasión de Gaza.

La posición de ambos partidos Demócrata y Republicano sin embargo, es el apoyo total para la existencia de Israel, lo cual significa la perpetuación del estado racista colonial en tierra palestina. La justificación dada es la suposición de que Israel es el único lugar desde el Holocausto Nazi de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, donde las personas judías pueden estar seguras.

Nunca se dirige a la cuestión del porqué los palestinos, un pueblo mayormente pastoril que no jugó ningún papel en los crímenes del imperialismo alemán, deben pagar el precio por el exterminio del pueblo judío en Europa.

Otra cuestión que se menciona poco es el hecho que muchos judíos en Israel, al igual que la gran mayoría de palestinos que viven allí, sufren gravemente por la pobreza. De hecho, de todos los países en el mundo desarrollado, Israel es el segundo en desigualdad de ingresos. ¿Cuál país es el primero en desigualdad? Estados Unidos. (BBC News, 27 de marzo, 2006)

El Instituto Nacional de Seguros de Israel encontró en el 2007 que uno en cada cuatro israelíes vive bajo el nivel de pobreza. Para los niños es peor aún. Alrededor del 35 por ciento de los niños israelíes viven en la pobreza — así que Israel es uno de los países del Oeste que tiene el porcentaje más grande de niños pobres. Al mismo tiempo, el número de millonarios israelíes per cápita es el doble del promedio mundial, según el World Wealth Report de 2005. (The Jewish Journal, 8 de marzo, 2007)

La situación en Jerusalén es peor aún, con un “62 por ciento de las familias árabes viviendo debajo del nivel de pobreza comparado con un 23 por ciento de las familias judías en la ciudad. Setenta y seis por ciento de los niños árabes y 44 por ciento de los niños judíos viven en la pobreza en Jerusalén.” (Haaretz, 24 de

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